

THE LINGUISTIC REALITY IN THE ARAB COUNTRIES REFLECTED IN POLISH ARABISTS' STUDIES

Elżbieta Górska (Kraków)

To discuss this review topic I was inspired by the subject matter of the 32nd Congress of the Polish Oriental Society that was held in Warsaw on June 27-28, 2006. The main topic, namely *The Polish Oriental Studies towards tradition and changes in the Orient*, inclined me to consider if the research of the Polish scholars in the field of the Arabic language studies keep up with the changing reality in the area of linguistics and, moreover, if they reflect this reality in proper and reliable way. I mostly consider the reaction to the current phenomena in the vast area of the spoken language as well as in the written one, namely in the language of the press.

The literary and even classical languages definitely record themselves in the linguistic reality of the contemporary Arabic users, however this area is certainly more conservative. The written variant of the modern literary Arabic undergoes slow changes influenced by those that are most used in everyday life. As a matter of fact, the elaboration written on basis of the literary Arabic is more frequently discussed and the achievements of the Polish Professors of the Arabic Philology working on this issue in both fields of literature and linguistics, are widely known and frequently quoted¹.

I am not going to discuss the results of my own studies which I have repeatedly presented in my articles and papers, and the material of which is mostly the language of works of the Arabic belles-lettres. However, I would like to present some of the research directions and tendencies currently developed by the contemporary generation of the Polish Arabic scholars as well as their way of consideration of aspects of language and their reaction to the present linguistic phenomena. The subject matter becomes more and more popular among my candidates for master's and doctor's degree who along with group of students of Prof. Andrzej Zaborski create, or could create in Cracow an important study center for the current linguistic situation in the Arab countries.

I think that in many reasons this kind of review relates to the form of the present commemorative book and without hesitation it can be dedicated to the Professor Andrzej Pisowicz. This prominent linguist and specialist in Iranian languages, is one of those people in whom the young scholars and students of Arabic Philology interested

¹ For example, in review articles such as: Dziekan M. M., Poniatowski, Z., *A Bibliography of Arabic and Islamic Studies in Poland (1945-1992)*, ZaiL UW, Warsaw 1993; Dziekan M. M. *Badania arabistyczne i islamistyczne w Polsce. Zarys dziejów i problematyki* [*Arabic and Islamic Studies in Poland. History and Problem Outline*] [in:] „Islam a świat”, ed. R. Backer and Sh. Kitab, Toruń 2004; Górska E., *Traditions and Main Directions of Development of Oriental Studies in Cracow*, [in:] “Studies on the Developing Countries” No 1/5/1988, Warsaw pp. 177-186; Zaborski A., *Z dziejów nauczania języka arabskiego w Uniwersytecie Jagiellońskim* [*From the History of the Arabic language teaching on Jagiellonian University*] [in:] “Biuletyn Glottodydaktyczny” No 2, 1996.

in linguistics always find support and content-related help. Speaking Arabic perfectly, he agrees to review our master's and doctoral theses, however only those that are conformable with his competence and interests as he remarks with the modesty of the great scholar.

Prof. Pisowicz's field of interest covers various issues, for example, onomastics, etymology of the Arabic words and those derived from the Arabic existing in other languages. Nevertheless, he prefers to discuss the current phenomena in modern Arabic: phonology and lexis in dialects, didactics of the Arabic, or variety of language in mass media. The latter problem was the subject of our discussion during my postdoctoral examination and was brought up by the Professor's request to present the linguistic situation in the Arab world. I am going to discuss this problem in this article in order to move the topic closer and point its difficulty which is followed by the amount of work and challenges ahead of the young Polish adepts and students of the Arabic Philology.

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Generally, the linguistic situation in the Arab countries can be described as diglossial. It is characterized by coexistence of the literary Arabic and its dialects in complementary distribution, acting in different, both completing and excluding each other spheres of the social life. As a result, the literary language, mostly the written one, is used in literature, press, partly on radio and television. It is also used in formal situations such as ceremonial speeches, Friday sermons in the mosque as well as during the conversation of the highly educated people from different countries who would like to reach the common linguistic level. However, the natural means of communication is mostly a dialect of a given Arab country which also slowly gains the written forms; for example, cartoons in newspapers as well as dialogues in comics and plays are written in dialect.

The above description is very much simplified and it usually serves an explanation of the basic issues related to the form and range of use of the modern Arabic to the non-Arabists.

As a matter of fact, for about 40 years multiglossia and pluriglossia have been discussed in the Arabic Studies in the world. H. Blanc² and A. S. Kaye³ discussed the previous one in their articles and the latter followed the concept of J. Dichy⁴.

The detailed analysis of the differences in the variety of the language classification by Blanc and Dichy would go beyond the limits of this article. However both scholars clearly point at the existence of not only two but at least a few language varieties creating a peculiar continuum and existing in complementary distribution, with their completing each other functions that refer not only to two but to many levels of the language use. These varieties are, for example: the one separated by Dichy Middle Arabic type 1 which is a result of including the regional dialect forms to the literary language, or Middle Arabic type 2 which is a result of including the literary forms to the regional dialect. In the Maghreb countries such as Morocco and Tunisia, the linguistic reality is even more complicated since there the phenomenon of the common use of French is

² Blanc, H. 1960, *Stylistic Variations in Spoken Arabic: a sample of interdialectal educated conversation*, [in:] Ferguson, C. A. (ed.). *Harvard Middle Eastern Monographs III*, Boston; pp. 80-160.

³ Kaye, A. S. 1994, *Formal vs. Informal in Arabic: Diglossia, Triglossia, Tetraglossia, etc., Poliglossia – Multiglossia Viewed as a Continuum*, [in:] "Zeitschrift für Arabische Linguistik" 24, Wiesbaden, p. 51.

⁴ Dichy J. 1994, *La pluriglossie de l'arabe*, Damascus.

imposed on the diglossial situation, which is described as French-Arabic bilingualism. However, it is a specific bilingualism, often leading in practice to the phenomenon of "code switching" and creating a separate language register which is a mixture of the local dialect and literary Arabic and French.

Those who entered the Arabic Studies in the 60's and the 70's had no idea how, in fact, the reality in the Arab countries was complicated. Obviously, they were aware of the basic dichotomy, namely the literary language/dialect but definition of diglossia introduced by Ferguson in 1959⁵ was not widely used, not to mention multi- or pluriglossia. Students were aware of the varieties of dialects however they still painfully gained knowledge of the difference between the literary language and particular dialects when they experienced helplessness of a person who spoke only the literary language completely useless in everyday life.

Paradoxically, the native speakers themselves imposed the complete priority of such form of language as material for studies. Nowadays, many of them consider this particular field the only one that is worth interest, and I base this statement on the opinion of scholars from the authoritative Arabic Study Centers in Beirut and Damascus. In this light, worth stressing is the fact that our great Professors-Arabists quite early noticed the necessity for development and popularization of knowledge of dialects, the result of which are textbooks for Moroccan and Tunisian dialect teaching published by T. Lewicki in 1972⁶. However, those were mainly fairytales and folk anecdotes, lexis of which definitely was not adequate to reality of everyday life.

A. Czapkiewicz created the broad theoretical base of dialect teaching in his important monograph: *The Verb in Modern Arabic Dialects as an Exponent of the Development Processes Occurring in Them* (Wrocław – Warszawa – Kraków – Gdańsk, 1975). It is a very interesting, and modern at that time attempt of the synthetic grasp of the processes influencing the shaping and development of the contemporary Arabic dialects from the scientific point of view. Based on the analysis of the morphological forms of a verb in over 30 dialects and their confrontation with the analogous forms in classical Arabic and Semitic languages the author observed the universality and regularity of disappearance and revival of certain forms. He named it and elaborated on as a "pulsatory" theory of dialect development, highly valued by the Arabists of the Western World. The very important step in the direction of regarding the linguistic realities in everyday life of Egypt was the textbooks published by A. Zaborski: *Dialekt egipski języka arabskiego* [Egyptian Dialect of Arabic Language] (Kraków, 1982) and *Rozmówki arabskie. Dialekt egipski* [Manual of Arabic Conversation. Egyptian Dialect] (Warszawa, 1988). A year later the manual by J. Danecki: *Wstęp do dialektologii arabskiej* [Introduction to the Arabic Dialectology] (Warszawa, 1989) was published. It is a valuable survey study which until now is the most willingly and with a great benefit used by the Polish students of Arabic Philology.

Personally, I highly value another not too big in size manual by J. Danecki: *Współczesny język arabski i jego dialekty* [Modern Arabic Language and Its Dialects] (Warsaw, 2000) where he points the least discussed concept of the Middle Arabic, namely the middle or mixed variety I have mentioned, and which I am going to discuss. The sign of reaction of the younger generation to the Arabic linguistic reality is not a very popularized but interesting work of J. Murkocińska: *Związki frazeologiczne*

⁵ Ferguson C. A. 1959, *Diglossia*, [in:] "Word" 15:2, pp. 325-340.

⁶ Lewicki T. 1972 (1st ed.) and 1980 (2nd ed.) *Materiały pomocnicze do nauki języka arabskiego. Arabskie teksty dialektyczne* [Supplementary Materials for the Arabic Language Teaching. Arabic Dialectal Texts], Kraków.

w języku prasy arabskiej [*Collocations in Language of the Arabic Press*] (Kraków, 2005). It was written as a result of the field studies carried during her 5-year stay in Syria and is an attempt to describe the awareness of idioms used in daily Syrian press in 2000-2001 among the native speakers. The book answers the question how much the word phrases undergo lexis and how easy they are to connect, which is eventually dissolved by the authoritative voice, namely by the opinion of Syrians, citizens of Damascus.

The publication was evaluated on the base of J. Murkocińska's doctoral thesis *Współczesna frazeologia codziennej prasy syryjskiej w percepcji rodzimych użytkowników języka* [*Modern Phraseology of the Daily Syrian Press in Perception of the Native Speakers*] (2002) reviewed by Prof. A. Pisowicz whose essential and kind remarks influenced the final form of this monograph.

The interest in the language of the Arabic press is also remarked by I. Król in her article entitled *Język prasy arabskiej w świetle aktualnych wydarzeń na Bliskim Wschodzie*⁷ [*The Language of the Arabic Press in the Light of Present Events in the Middle East*]. The Author presents the close relation of lexis and phraseology used in texts with the division to the parties of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and their part in the development of events. She demonstrates on various examples from the Syrian and Egyptian daily newspapers the meaning of the linguistic elements selection as means of political propaganda used by the Arabic media.

In the one of the most contemporary trend of joining the linguistic studies with the social and cultural aspects there remain two valuable works of students and co-workers of Prof. A. Zaborski, namely the one by I. Nasalski: *Die politische Metapher im Arabischen. Untersuchungen zu Semiotik und Symbolik der politischen Sprache am Beispiel Ägyptens* (Wiesbaden, 2004) and the other one by A. Płonka: *L'idée de langue libanaise d'après Sa'id 'Aql* (Paris, 2004).

As I have already mentioned at the beginning, next to the well known and valued by the Arabists environment works I would like to particularly stress the works of the group hardly ever mentioned, namely the works of the candidates for the master's and doctor's degrees. Their studies are undoubtedly limited, however they are still worth attention. On one hand, these studies are the result of the intellectual interests of the young generation and what follows they are a certain hint what fields of knowledge should be kept in mind in the future, and which should be emphasized in didactics. On the other hand, there can be found fresh and original theses and even reliable cutting research, which often unpublished, is lost and forgotten in the archives.

Personally, I am very satisfied with the research that is done by four of my candidates for doctor's degree. Their research covers the considerable field of the Arab world, and its results, as we all hope, will constitute both the most current and cross-sectional description of the present linguistic phenomena that take place there.

Małgorzata Kniaź prepares a dissertation entitled *The Middle Form of the Arabic Language in Journalism of the Egyptian*. The source comes from the current records of the TV program „Al-Mašhad” broadcast by the Egyptian news channel „Qanāt an-nīl li-l-ahbār” which discusses the current problems of the Arab World, namely political, social and cultural ones.

The candidate for the doctor's degree aims to prove that the Middle form of the Arabic language that serves the communication in those subjects is not uniform in the structural aspect. Its form is verified and mostly depends on extralingual elements such

⁷ [In:] *Spotkania Arabistyczne*, vol. V, Kraków 2004, pp. 43-45.

as topic, social status and education of the message sender, and the manner in which one interprets the topic and situation that is faced. The Author assumes that she will be able to single out the sociolinguistic elements connected with the use of the given language form, characterize the situations in which the speaker chooses the particular form, and the reasons for this choice. She would also like to analyze the "code-switching" phenomenon and the reasons for switching from one language register to another within the limits of one utterance. Perhaps, it will be even possible to set certain regularities within which switching to another linguistic level takes place.

Both importance and necessity of such kind of studies seems obvious to me, and M. Książ proves it in her latest articles. In one of them, namely *Zróżnicowanie form językowych w ramach jednego rejestru języka arabskiego*⁸ [*Differentiation of the Linguistic Forms Within the Limits of One Register of the Arabic Language*], she juxtaposes utterances of two experts of World Health Organization and American Immunology Academy on the same subject, namely the threat of the bird flu in Egypt. An extremely interesting linguistic form analysis of both interlocutors shows notable differences in the manner of the mixed language use. In this case, namely with the similar background, subject of conversation and level of education, it points at the personality factor as a reason for choice of given elements of expression. One of the speakers who is a more winning and open person, particularly cares about the communicative form of his utterance, he endeavors to speak simply and clearly. He often repeats information that was earlier expressed on a higher linguistic level in a dialectal form. The other one, more embarrassed and considering himself a serious person tries to level up the meaning of his utterance and make it more official with the use of raising the register to the phonological level (careful articulation of interdental consonants) and frequent interference of English vocabulary.

The juxtaposition of two texts from the daily sport press in the article *Funkcjonowanie dialektu w prasie egipskiej*⁹ [*Functioning of Dialect in the Egyptian Press*] proves that the style of utterance may highly depend on the type of publication. The interview form gives the author a better field for research than coverage or a feature article. The language is looser; the analysis shows the use of many forms of the middle form of language, which Clive Holes calls "hybrid"¹⁰ (namely, those that are the compilation of literary and dialectal language elements) on the phonological, morphological and syntactical surface.

In turn, these forms are missing in the text of the feature article, where the mixture of language registers is limited to interlacement of literary parts with dialectal ones. The latter are used to make a direct contact with a reader, bringing the whole utterance closer and making it reliable.

The task of Agnieszka Lasek and Katarzyna Osuch, studying the present linguistic situation in Morocco and Tunis, seems even more difficult since, as I have mentioned before, the continuum of the Arabic language register is additionally imposed by the generally used French, not necessarily in its pure form.

In fact, in Morocco as well as in Tunis, there can be observed the rise of a specific language code that is a combination of a local dialect and the French language, sometimes with the addition of the modern literary language in the spoken version. Both

⁸ Accepted to print in postconference volume: *Świat Słowian w języku i kulturze* [*World of the Slavs in Language and Culture*], Pobierowo 2006.

⁹ Accepted to print in this year's volume: *Studia Linguistica Universitatis Jagellonicae Cracoviensis*.

¹⁰ Holes C. 1995, *Modern Arabic. Structures, Functions and Varieties*, London – New York, p. 70.

ladies are going to establish if the phenomenon of the code-switching in Tunis and Morocco areas leads to the formation of the separate language form, and what follows, they are going to establish the characteristic phonological, morphological and syntactical features of this form. As in this case, an incredibly important element of the planned dissertations is their sociolinguistic extent since it is assumed that the mixing of the linguistic material takes place in certain communicative circumstances. The reasons for such linguistic behavior of the interlocutors are of the extralingual manner, which we hope to study and verify on the bases of the material from the current radio and television records, as well as one from the interviews with the native speakers.

In order to bring nearer the difficulty of this task, I will quote a short fragment from K. Osuch's article *Między dyglosją a bilingwizmem. Analiza sytuacji językowej w Tunezji*¹¹ [*Between Diglossia and Bilingualism. Analysis of Linguistic Situation in Tunisia*], who referring to Y. Mahmoud writes as follows:

If the speaker is uneducated and monolingual the educated Tunisian uses the dialectal form, sometimes mixed with the literary language. If he addresses his family, the literary language with interference of dialect is used (controversial! – my remark). At work, during conversation with bilingual coworkers, he uses the mixture of French, dialect and sometimes English (during the specialized conversations, especially technical ones – my remark). French often dominates during conversation with a person coming from Maghreb, no matter the topic or level of formality. Addressing the Arab not coming from Maghreb, he would use the negotiated, simplified version of the literary language¹².

K. Osuch rightly points that the person of interlocutor is only one of the elements providing code-switching.

The proper reaction to this linguistic reality from glottodidactic point of view seems to be an incredibly difficult task. Polish Arabists have already tried to elaborate on the basis of methodology of the literary Arabic language teaching¹³ however no one has attempted to formulate instructions concerning either dialects or the middle forms of language teaching. It is understood in the light of the immense variety of these forms and styles as well as the lack of rules coding and standardizing these phenomena.

Marek Skoczek tries to fill this gap working on new dissertation under the working title *Methodology of Teaching Dialects and Middle Forms of the Arabic Language*, basing on Syrian, Lebanese and Moroccan dialect. The current linguistic material coming from the Arabic radio and television programs will constitute the field of studies on acquisition and proper use of middle form.

The candidates for the master's degree also more willingly undertake studies on the language. I am going to list some of the chosen M. A. theses written in the past 10 years under the supervision of Prof. A. Zaborski:

- Nasalski, Ignacy (1996): *Kulturalna mówiona arabszczyzna (ESA) jako środek komunikacji wykształconych Arabów w radiu i telewizji* [*Educated Spoken Arabic*

¹¹ Accepted to print in postconference volume: *Świat Słowian w języku i kulturze* [*World of the Slavs in Language and Culture*], Pobierowo 2006.

¹² Mahmoud Y. 1986, *Arabic after Diglossia* [in:] "The Fergusonian Impact", vol. 1, Berlin, pp. 243-244.

¹³ Górski E., Skoczek M., Hasan A. 1999, *Dydaktyka języka arabskiego* [*Didactics of Arabic Language*], Warszawa; Król I. 2005, *Nauczanie języka arabskiego* [*The Arabic Language Teaching*], Kraków. One of the reviewers of the doctoral dissertation by I. Król on a similar topic: *Nauczanie języka arabskiego jako obcego w świetle współczesnych metod glottodydaktycznych* [*The Arabic Language Teaching as Foreign Language in the Light of Modern Glottodidactic Methods*] in 2003, was Prof. A. Pisowicz.

(*ESA*) as Means of Communication of the Educated Arabs on Radio and Television] (an attempt to record certain state of the cultural language of Palestinians in Israel in the 80's);

- Kafel, Przemysław (2002): *Słownik podstawowy polsko-marokański. Dialekt Rabatu* [Polish-Moroccan Basic Dictionary. Dialect of Rabat];
- Graczyk, Anna (2004): *Zarys dialektu chrześcijan i muzułmanów ze Šfā'amir w Dolnej Galilei* [Outline of the Christian and Muslim Dialect in Šfā'amir – Lower Galilee];
- Wolańska-Fettes, Urszula (2004): *Słownik dialektów Jordanii* [Jordan Dialects Dictionary].

My candidates for the master's degree studied the following issues:

- Woźniak, Agnieszka E. (2003): *Nowomowa w prasie irackiej. Mechanizmy manipulacji językowej za rządów Saddama Husajna* [Newspeech in Iraqi Press. Mechanisms of Linguistic Manipulation under Saddam Husain's Administration];
- Książ, Małgorzata (2004): *Zdania podrzędnie złożone w dialekcie kairskim języka arabskiego* [Subordinate Clauses in Cairene Dialect of the Arabic Language];
- Masłowska, Daria (2004): *Cechy charakterystyczne dialektu Fezu z uwzględnieniem zewnętrznych wpływów językowych* [Characteristic Features of Dialect of Fez with the Consideration of the External Linguistic Influences];
- Majchrzycka, Katarzyna (2004): *Świat w krzywym zwierciadle. Sposoby wyrażania ironii w dialekcie syryjskim na podstawie wybranych utworów Muḥammada al-Māḡūṭa* [The Arab World in the Broken Mirror. Means of Irony Expression in Syrian Dialect on the Basis of the Chosen Writings of Muhammad al-Māḡūṭ];
- Osuch, Katarzyna (2005): *Tematyczny słownik polsko-tunezyjski ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem dialektu Tunisu* [Polish-Tunisian Thematic Dictionary With a Specific Consideration of the Dialect of Tunis].

I would like to stress that I have listed only those theses which were based on the material recording the current language phenomena, namely texts of the daily press, records of radio and television programs (also films and TV series) as well as on the own field studies.

The attempts to analysis of the spoken language with reference to the latest linguistic theories and their rules also seem worth noticing. Łukasz Bogusław is presently preparing such interesting dissertation for his master's degree on the grounds of the cognitive language theory. Its working title is *Sposób wyrażania i konceptualizacji ludzkiego życia wewnętrznego w dialekcie syryjskim języka arabskiego* [Means of Expression and Conceptualization of the Human Inner Life in Syrian Dialect of the Arabic Language] and was inspired by A. Żabicka's book *Pojęcie jaźni: konceptualizacja i wyrażanie a język* [The Concept of Ego: Conceptualization and Expression vs. Language] (Kraków, 2002). It is an elaboration interpreting theses by G. Lakoff and M. Johnson in *Philosophy in the Flesh. The Embodied Mind and Its Challenge to Western Thought* (New York-Chicago, 1999). The candidate for the master's degree assumes that lexis of the English language in its colloquial form has a broader than in other languages range of terms responsible for expressing abstract phenomena of social roles, emotional states, will, opinion, awareness, mind. This thesis will be undoubtedly the first of this kind – referring to Syrian dialect – attempt to show how and in what way the theory of general metaphor of subject and concept of "I" is expressed.

As it appears from this short review of the current studies in the area of Arabic linguistics, the Polish Arabists can be proud not only of widely known successes in re-

search on the traditional form of language and literature but also of reaction to present, the most current and lively phenomena and linguistic problems. It turns out that the young scholars as well as students of our field want to and are able to say a lot about reality changing in this area in the Arab countries.

With this subject and such way of reaction to the contemporary world I have tried to arouse interest in young people and I think that I have succeeded. In turn, I was taught that by my teachers and masters mentioned on the first pages of this article. To this circle I also include Prof. Andrzej Pisowicz whose open mind and curiosity of the true scholar may still inspire the researchers from beyond the Iranists milieu.